

REMARKS

Reconsideration of the above-identified application in view of the foregoing amendments and following remarks is respectfully requested.

Status of the Claims and Explanation of Amendments

By this paper title is amended. These amendments are believed to resolve the objections of the March 1, 2007 Office Action at page 2.

Claims 1-11 are pending. Claims 7-9 and 11 are amended herein, claims 1-6 and 10 are cancelled herein without prejudice or disclaimer. Applicant acknowledges with appreciation the indication of allowable subject matter in claims 7-9 and 11. These claims were, however, objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim. [03/01/07 Office Action at p. 6]. By this paper, claim 7 is amended to incorporate the subject matter of canceled independent base claim 1 and dependent claims 2 and 6. Accordingly, independent claim 7 and dependent claims 8, 9, and 11 are believed to be in condition for allowance.

Claims 1-6 and 10 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as allegedly being anticipated by Hirasawa, U.S. Patent No. 6,278,489 B1. These rejections are respectfully asserted to be moot in light of the cancellation of claims 1-6, and 10 and amendment of claims 7-9 and 11.

Nothing in this paper should be regarded in any way as admissions that the cited documents are, in fact, prior art. Likewise, Applicant has chosen not to swear behind Hirasawa, cited by the office action, or to otherwise submit evidence to traverse the rejection at this time. Applicant, however, reserves the right, as provided by 37 C.F.R. §§ 1.131 and 1.132, to do so in the future as appropriate.

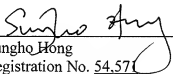
CONCLUSION

For the above-stated reasons, this application is respectfully asserted to be in condition for allowance. An early and favorable examination on the merits is requested. In the event that a telephone conference would facilitate the examination of this application in any way, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at the number provided.

THE COMMISSIONER IS HEREBY AUTHORIZED TO CHARGE ANY ADDITIONAL FEES WHICH MAY BE REQUIRED FOR THE TIMELY CONSIDERATION OF THIS AMENDMENT UNDER 37 C.F.R. §§ 1.16 AND 1.17, OR CREDIT ANY OVERPAYMENT TO DEPOSIT ACCOUNT NO. 13-4500, ORDER NO. 1232-5072.

Respectfully submitted,
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